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A. Briefly describe your accomplishments in the following areas. Where possible, indicate the goals from your work plan and the desired and actual outcomes.

1. Help build early childhood systems and access to comprehensive services for all low-income children.

Two key accomplishments of the Iowa Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO) in the area of system development occurred in Iowa: the annual Iowa Early Care, Health and Education Congress and the evolution of our Early Childhood Core Stakeholder activity. The Congress took place on November 18 and 19 with 428 attendees. Day one's emphasis on early childhood as economic development presentations by Cornell University professor Mildred Warner, Joan Lombardi and Federal Reserve regional economic analyst, Rob Grunewald. Day two featured a presentation by Kim Ellis from Ruby Payne's Aha! Process, Inc. Along with congress support and participation on the planning committee, Iowa HSSCO developed four breakout sessions: 1) Early Childhood Oral Health Issues (part of the Oral Health Work Group, see below); 2) The Iowa Impact of Good Start, Grow Smart; 3) the future of NAEYC Accreditation; and 4) The ethnography of Latino children in Iowa. One outcome of the Congress is the development of a group that includes HSSCO to fund an "economic impact" report for Iowa.

This year brought greater leadership and organization to an effort that began in 2002 with a grant from SmartStart to create a unified early childhood system capable of delivering comprehensive services to all Iowa children. At a summer symposium led by SmartStart consultants, the group codified its mission and purpose. The group organized itself into six system component groups based on the work of Sharon Kagan: quality services and programs; accountability for results; parent, family and community engagement; professional development; resources and funding; and governance, planning and administration. Iowa HSSCO has emerged as a key leader in this effort and strengthened Head Start's participation with the Stakeholders group by ensuring representation on five of these groups, and establishing formal endorsements of the Stakeholders' vision and result areas by the Head Start Association and HSSCO. The group also embraced the activities of Iowa's HRSA-funded Early Childhood Comprehensive System Grant as its own work. The group is poised to address five result areas: healthy children, children ready to succeed in school, secure and nurturing families, safe and supportive communities, and secure and nurturing child care environments.

2. Encourage widespread collaboration between Head Start and other appropriate programs. Describe your accomplishments and outcomes in the eight priority areas.

Health Care

Funded through a Head Start grant, the Iowa Head Start Health Project, under the direction of Iowa HSSCO, promoted and supported state and local efforts to improve program coordination and delivery of health services for Iowa Head Start children. Among the accomplishments were: a) created a new draft for a cooperative agreement among the Iowa Department of Health, the Iowa Department of Education and the Iowa Head Start Association regarding collaborations around WIC, Maternal and Child Health and the Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program, b) hosted a training for 40 Head Start health specialists to disseminate information from the 2003 National Head Start Health Institute, c) created a Head Start Health Specialists listsery, providing regular information about health information, d) provided copies of Stepping Stones to Using Caring for our Children, National Health and Safety Performance Standards" Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs for each Head Start classroom, e) created and disseminated a comprehensive health care resource list, f) administered a survey and issued a county-by-county assessment report of health care performance indicators for Head Start and Early Head Start, and g) collected the data for a comprehensive networking matrix of Head Start, Early Head Start, public health, WIC, hawk-I, and Maternal/Child Health clinics personnel disaggregated to the county level. A key highlight of the research conducted by this product is the fact that survey respondents reported 93% of children had received oral health screening even though 72 or Iowa's 99 counties are designated Health Professional Shortage Areas for Dental Care.

After a seminal Head Start/Early Head Start Oral Health Care Forum in April sponsored by the Iowa Head Start Association, Iowa HSSCO coordinated the development of an action agenda that shaped activities for the rest of the year. The fifty-eight participants, including representatives from state agencies for health, education and human services, local county health offices, health care specialists from Child Care Resource and Referral, dentists and dental assistants, and representatives from 26 Iowa Head Start and Early Head Start programs, drafted goals and strategies that led to: a) a break-out session at the Iowa Early Childhood Care and Education Congress on Early Childhood Oral Health, b) a networking training session on effective use of Health Services Advisory Councils, c) and the development of oral health information packets to be distributed to child care providers and state legislators. Forum participants felt a strong need to get more information on oral health care to these targeted groups. The Oral Health Bureau of the Iowa Department of Public Health designated a person specifically to work with Head Start and these efforts. The action agenda includes activities for 2004 and following.

Welfare

The HSSCO coordinator was appointed to the Iowa's Family Development and Self-Sufficiency Program (FaDDS) Council. This group oversees the policy and directions of a state program designed to help families receiving welfare assistance reach self-sufficiency. A key result of the work this year was as report showing that Head Start was among the top three closest collaborators with FaDSS among agencies across the state.

Childcare

Iowa HSSCO worked to support and advance a number of child care quality initiatives. First, a feasibility study and proposal for a Quality Rating System was completed. Development of the

system is underway with a launch in July 2005. Second, the Child Care Center Business Practices Program started this year to improve the quality and accessibility of child care in Iowa by assisting child care centers in the development and implementation of sound management practices, and making available limited financial assistance to centers in the form of forgivable loans. HSSCO supported the reading of the first loan applications, some from centers in partnership with Head Start. Third, Iowa's licensed T.E.A.C.H. program began its first semester this fall by awarding fifty-five TEACH scholarships. These scholarships allow recipients to attend nine separate community colleges, including some online programs. Five Head Start employees are among the TEACH scholarship recipients representing three Head Start grantees.

Community Services

Iowa HSSCO initiated new efforts to enhance relations between Head Start and Iowa Community Empowerment. Those activities included publishing an article on successful local Head Start/Community Empowerment, a presentation by the state Community Empowerment Coordinator at the Head Start Parent Leadership Conference on serving on Local Empowerment Boards, and regular meetings with the statewide Community Empowerment team.

Family Literacy Services

Iowa HSSCO developed a number of efforts to connect the work of Head Start's CIRCLE/STEP initiative and a state-initiated early literacy program called Every Child Reads: Birth to Kindergarten. Brief overview of CIRCLE was presented at a round of technical assistance sessions for ECR trainers. The final statewide ECR train-the-trainer event included Head Start participation by Head Start literacy specialists, both state Head Start TA Network Specialist and the regional Head Start literacy specialist.

HSSCO supported Iowa Public Television's Ready To Learn project, including its First Book in Iowa project and its Mad Feelings/Challenging Behaviors project through Family Communications, Inc. Eight Head Start programs participated in the First Book program that provided monthly training for Head Start parents and the distribution of more than 1,400 books to Head Start children. At least two grantees sponsored Mad Feelings/Challenging Behavior workshops, and local workshops offered by Child Care Resource and Referral were attended by individual Head Start teachers.

On February 7, HSSCO provided a keynote address and led a workshop on the importance of parent involvement in literacy activities for a Head Start grantee based on the CIRCLE curriculum.

Services to Children with Disabilities

The Natural Allies project, funded by a grant through Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center of the University of North Carolina, conducted a series of training around the state on professional development of personnel to work with young children (0-5) in inclusive community settings. Head Start staff was participated in each of the four regional workshops. Iowa HSSCO was involved in the planning of these training events.

3. Facilitate Head Start's involvement in the development of state policies, plans, processes and decisions.

HSSCO facilitated the involvement of Head Start in the following groups and initiatives:

Iowa Early Childhood Core Stakeholders

- Iowa Apprenticeship/T.E.A.C.H.
- Child Care Center Business Practices Program
- Iowa Department of Education Cross-Bureau Early Learning Team
- Child Development Coordinating Council
- State Child Care Advisory Council
- Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children
- Iowa Child Care and Early Education NetWork
- Iowa Early Learning Standards Stakeholders
- Team Nutrition Grant Work Group
- Iowa Early Childhood Network
- Iowa's Program for Infant and Toddler Caregivers (PITC)

Specific accomplishments from HSSCO involvement in these groups include the acceptance of Head Start Program Performance Standards as a mark of quality within the Governor's Leadership Plan for 2003-04, the adoption of NAEYC standards as pre-school program standards for Iowa and presenting on Head Start collaboration at the Child Care Resource and Referral statewide "roundhouse" meeting.

B. Briefly discuss the following aspects of your work:

1. Describe how you have supported and collaborated with the Regional Office on ACF priorities (e.g. Fatherhood, Faith Based and Community, Healthy Marriage, Youth and Rural Initiatives), Regional priorities, TA Network, professional development, legislation, CAP Agencies, Head Start association, and other activities.

Fatherhood Supported and attended two Iowa Head Start-sponsored conferences in October on fatherhood and began a statewide networking effort to support fatherhood work within Head Start grantees.

Rural Initiatives Most HSSCO collaborations involve rural communities and support rural families and communities. Also presented a workshop on community-based collaborations for literacy in Mount Pleasant on behalf of Project Concern on April 8.

TA Network Participated in the Region VII TA Network meeting in Kansas City on October 27. The meeting included representatives from the new TA system, Collaboration Offices, and Head Start associations of the four states. The meetings facilitated statewide planning for child care collaborations and professional development. Regular contact with TA Network state specialists began in the fall as the network came into being.

Professional Development Co-sponsored, endorsed or otherwise supported training events including:

- 10th Annual Early Childhood Care, Health and Education Congress
- Day on the Hill Training
- Oral Health Care Forum
- Transportation Conference

Not including events mentioned above, connected Head Start with at least 11 other professional development opportunities available in Iowa and the surrounding region.

Legislation Notified Head Start grantees and encouraged participating in a TANF Hearing hosted by Iowa Senator Charles Grassley on Feb. 20. Supported, organized and attended the annual Day on the Hill event featuring keynotes by Ann Crittenden, former *New York Times*

reporter and author of *The Price of Motherhood*, and Iowa Governor Tom Vilsack. One hundred and thirty-seven people participated, including Head Start staff and parents. On day-two, participants visited state legislators.

Head Start Association A new Memorandum of Understanding was written and signed between the Iowa Department of Education and the Iowa Head Start Association to spell out the expectations and procedures for relations between the Iowa HSSCO and IHSA. HSSCO also facilitated and helped implement a new strategic plan for the organization that included four goals: 1) to have effective organization structure, 2) to be perceived as an early childhood leader, 3) expand membership, and 4) achieve sustainable financial stability, Worked to develop a strategic communications plan around reauthorization. HSSCO also availability of Head Start Bureau teleconferences via the Iowa Communications Network and videotape.

2. Describe strategies you found to be successful in overcoming barriers.

The most effective strategy we have found is the establishment of a common vision and goals for collaborative work at the very start, and then keeping your eyes on the prize: improved services for children and families of low income.

3. Indicate barriers that exist and the technical assistance support that is needed.

The three barriers are: 1) insufficient staffing that makes projects move slowly, 2) frequent turnover in collaborators staff, and 3) difficulty prioritizing work. Collaboration frequently means more work for partners and HSSCO must take on some of that work to move the partnership forward. This among other factors makes the work time-consuming for our one-person office. Turnover means relationships must be re-established and plans revisited which dramatically slows progress. Prioritizing the wide range of activities of collaboration work is a constant challenge because the goals and priorities are far and wide-ranging, the additional ACF priorities increase the need for more collaboration even further, and the state and national trends in early childhood (increased push on assessment and accountability, expanded state engagement with pre-k services, increased professionalization of the field) demand responses to counter new threats and seize new opportunities.

4. Describe additional activities and successes in the past year.

Reconfigured and expanded the HSSCO Advisory Committee (Management Team) which met twice this year.

Supported and promoted the availability of Spanish Language Certified NRS assessors for the entire state.

Provided regular information on federal activity regarding Head Start reauthorization to state agencies.

C. Based on your responses to the questions above, how does that information impact your work plan or focus for the current or coming year?

Three changes in HSSCO's work plan will impact our future work:

- 1. Ongoing initiatives: In the wake of new relationships and plans development, we want to put special emphasis on three projects: emphasis on a limited number of initiatives to achieve real progress. Specifically, continued collaboration with Child Care quality initiatives, including new joint ventures; continued work on the oral health plan, including a social marketing campaign and a curriculum for parents; and the work of the Early Childhood Core Stakeholders group.
- 2. *New initiatives:* Develop two new collaborative relationships with: a) FaDSS programs to support family partnership agreements; b) IDEA Parts B and C to implement an MOA signed two years ago;
- 3. Creating a strong base for HSSCO work: With a new HSSCO Management Team, we want to establish a stronger basis for future work including a new website, brochure and Head Start information dissemination, developing HSSCO work data measures and indicators.